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December 21, 2006

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Gentlemen:

**Delta Ecosystem Risk Analysis**

At its November meeting, the CALFED Independent Science Board (ISB) reviewed and discussed a letter dated November 12, 2006, sent to you and the Board from Mr. Gary Bobker of The Bay Institute. The letter recommends that CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program agencies should, with the assistance of the ISB, undertake a risk-based analysis of Delta ecosystems. This work, according to Mr. Bobker, should be conducted within the current Delta Regional Ecosystem Restoration Implementation Plan (DRERIP) effort and augment the work currently being conducted under the Delta Risk Management Strategy (DRMS) to support the Delta Vision/Strategic Plan.

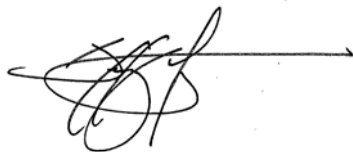
As you know, it is the responsibility of the ISB to oversee the application and effectiveness of science used to support CALFED decisions. The Board discussed the merits of Mr. Bobker's letter and is in general concurrence with its main premise. Based on current understanding, it is the view of the Board that the Delta Vision/Strategic Planning process would benefit from a more robust

and systematic assessment of the risks that future conditions pose to Delta ecosystems. The Delta Vision/Strategic Planning effort will be considering a range of potential management options. Neither DRMS nor DRERIP, in current form, will offer analytic tools sufficient to assess the risk that these options pose to native species and communities, including the habitats and hydrologic or hydrodynamic conditions that support them. Within DRMS, the work is focused principally on economic risks associated with levee stability. While in DRERIP, the emphasis is on using conceptual models to scientifically evaluate a list of ecosystem restoration actions.

The ISB recommends that the ERP agencies, in conjunction with DRMS and Delta Vision/Strategic Planning team, incorporate ecosystem risk analysis into current and future planning for the Delta. The Board does not seek to prescribe how this should be accomplished (whether through DRERIP, some other existing program, or a whole new program), recognizing that a range of staff, funding and time constraints must be considered. The Board requests that you coordinate your plans for this effort with Science Program staff. In addition, the Board is seeking to review this issue further at the February 21-23, 2007, ISB meeting. To that end, we ask that a representative from the ERP provide an assessment of how the program envisions incorporating ecosystem-based risk analysis into current and future planning for the Delta. We also ask that a representative from the DRMS program provide a brief update on its own approaches to assessment of risk to delta ecosystems. Finally, we also ask that a representative from the Delta Vision/Strategic Plan team brief the Board on how these risk assessments will inform the Delta Vision/Strategic Plan effort.

The Board looks forward to discussing these early efforts to identify and incorporate the risks that future conditions pose to Delta ecosystems and offering support and guidance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jeffrey Mount', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jeffrey Mount, Chair  
Independent Science Board

Attachments: October 12, 2006, and November 10, 2006, memos from Gary Bobker.

cc: See attached list

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